

5440-67 Teacher of the Blind and Visually Impaired

The holder is authorized to provide comprehensive special education services to individuals age 3 through 21 who are blind or visually impaired, as defined in federal regulations pertaining to special education eligibility. The holder is authorized to provide or oversee the provision of instructional services and to collaborate with an interdisciplinary team to design, implement, and evaluate educational plans and accommodations for individuals with visual impairments.

In order to qualify for this endorsement, the candidate shall demonstrate the following:

Knowledge Standards:

Demonstrates knowledge of the implications of blindness and visual impairment for learning and development; appropriate procedures and strategies for identifying the needs and supporting the learning and development of blind or visually impaired students; and procedural and consultation/collaboration knowledge and skills essential to the effective education of blind or visually impaired students, as delineated in current national professional standards¹. Specifically, the educator understands:

Foundations:

The history of, and theories, philosophies, and models that provide the basis for, education of the blind or visually impaired

Typical and atypical early childhood through adult growth and development within each domain, including the tremendous variation in how individuals learn and typically develop, and the variety of economic, social, and cultural influences which affect each student's life

Current state and federal laws, regulations, and procedures governing referral; identification/ evaluation; eligibility determination; Individual Education Plan (IEP) development, implementation, and monitoring; and educational placement of individuals who are blind or visually impaired

Various educational placement options and how they impact a blind or visually impaired student's linguistic, academic, social, and emotional development

Professional and ethical standards of practice

Program Development:

Appropriate roles and responsibilities of teachers of the blind or visually impaired and other personnel who support the education of students who are blind or visually impaired

Principles and practices of effective collaboration and consultation in learning environments

Principles of family-centered practice

Local, state, and community services and educational alternatives that are available to support students who are blind or visually impaired and their families, including resources to help parents/guardians deal with concerns regarding educational options and communication modes/philosophies

Strategies for preparing and assisting blind or visually impaired students and their families to make effective transitions from program to program and setting to setting

5440-67 Teacher of the Blind and Visually Impaired (Cont'd)

Assessment:

The components of an appropriate evaluation for eligibility, placement, and program planning decisions for students who are blind or visually impaired, and interpretation of assessment results

Specialized terminology used in the assessment of blind or visually impaired students

Measurement theory and practice, including issues of validity, reliability, norming, and bias

The impact of blindness or visual impairment on the results of other forms of assessment (e.g., psychosocial, cognitive, or vocational)

Blindness/Visual Impairments and Interventions:

The human visual system and related diseases and disorders of the human visual system, including the impact of medications on the visual system

The potential implications of blindness or visual impairment for sensory, cognitive, communicative, physical/motor, behavioral, social/emotional development, and independence

The impact of multiple disabilities on the student who is blind or visually impaired

The interaction of primary language, culture, and familial background with the blind or visually impaired student's disability including the effects of visual impairment on the individual's family and the reciprocal impact on the individual's self-esteem

How etiology, age of onset, and degree of vision loss may impact a student's ability to learn

How other senses compensate when there is an impairment in one or more senses

The importance of blind or visually impaired students achieving age-appropriate levels of literacy and academic achievement

Instructional strategies, devices, and accommodations that support the learning of individuals who are blind or visually impaired in all educational settings

Instructional methods for teaching disability-unique core skills (e.g., Braille, assistive technology skills, and daily living and social skills)

The value of pairing blind or visually impaired students with role models and/or peers who have similar visual impairments

5440-67 Teacher of the Blind and Visually Impaired (Cont'd)

Performance Standards:

Working in collaboration with the student, his or her family, and other school personnel and consultants, the Teacher of the Blind helps to determine eligibility for educational services; helps to develop, implement, and evaluate educational programs for blind or visually impaired students; identifies and implements accommodations to learning materials or environments in order to support inclusion; and provides direct instructional services, in order to enable students who are blind or visually impaired to meet Vermont's learning expectations for students. Specifically, the educator:

Foundations:

Advocates for appropriate services to meet the individual needs of students who are blind or visually impaired

Adheres to ethical and professional standards, and state and federal legal and regulatory requirements pertaining to the education of students who are blind or visually impaired

Program Development:

Works cooperatively and respectfully with all families to support and enhance students' learning and development

Advocates that multiple factors be considered in the development of educational plans for students who are blind or visually impaired: (e.g., severity of visual impairment and potential for using residual vision, independent living needs, and social and emotional needs)

Facilitates the coordination of support personnel to meet the needs of blind or visually impaired students

Supports students and families as they transition between and among settings and programs

Assessment:

Selects and administers appropriate assessments and instruments for the purposes of determining eligibility for special education services, developing and implementing instruction, and evaluating student performance over time

Gathers and interprets information about academic background, medical and family history, and eye reports as they relate to the student's visual status

Participates in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of assessment accommodations which enable participation of students who are blind or visually impaired in local and statewide assessment systems

Interprets, synthesizes, summarizes and effectively communicates assessment information in written reports that are understandable by all who use them

5440-67 Teacher of the Blind and Visually Impaired (Cont'd)

Blindness/Visual Impairments and Interventions:

Identifies levels of language and literacy development and designs lessons that are appropriate in relation to students' academic needs, developmental age, and type/degree of visual impairment, including assisting special educators in the planning and implementation of instruction for blind or visually impaired students who have multiple disabilities and special needs

Enhances learning through the use of tactile and auditory materials and experiential activities

Designs a classroom environment to maximize opportunities for students' auditory, visual, and tactile learning

Uses resources, materials, and techniques that promote academic learning (e.g., Braille, large print, magnifiers, adaptive devices)

Collaborates with other educators in accommodating blind or visually impaired students by identifying, developing, or modifying educational materials or curricula, aspects of the classroom environment, or assistive devices, and by modeling teaching and/or classroom management techniques

Provides information and training to help parents understand the impact of a visual impairment on all areas of their child's life

Additional Requirements:

Completion of a baccalaureate level teacher preparation program in the education of the blind or visually impaired, or a minimum of 30 credits in the education of the blind or visually impaired.

A minimum of a practicum, or the equivalent, in the teaching of students who are blind or visually impaired.

¹. *What Every Special Educator Must Know: What Ethics, Standards, and Guidelines for Special Educators. Fifth Edition. (The Council for Exceptional Children, 2003).*